shops to supply her with goods, but took a special pride in buying each product from the town where the best quality of it was manufactured. She could do this either by my father's being posted within its district, by going there on a pagoda-visiting expedition, or by having relatives posted there; and a survey of all the household possessions I can remember makes a cross-section of Burmese crafts. All our blankets were Burmese *saungs*, good stoutly woven cotton pieces, about 7 feet long and 4½ feet wide. We had single ones of red, black and yellow stripes which looked very bright and barbaric; they came from the Chin Hills. We used these in the hotter months. During the colder months we used thicker *ok-saungs* which we got from Pakokku; they were 14 feet long and used doubled, with a fringe at both ends. These were woven very strong and white, with bold red stripes on them in pleasing combinations. All these saungs washed more and more beautiful to our childish eyes. My mother had a big collection of them in wooden chests and some of them have lasted 30 years and are still beautiful.

She was also very jealous of her collection of *hpyas*, mats for sleeping or sitting on, woven closely of the fibres of a reed called *thabaw*, or, finer still, of the outer skin of a grass-like plant, the *thin*. These light and flexible mats or *thinbyu* came from Laymyethna, "The Town of Four Faces". They were equally smooth on both sides and had velvet borders piped on, broad at one end and narrower at the other, to distinguish the head end for nobler use, and to be sure of always resting the feet on the same ignoble end. We had them in big sizes for the beds and for afternoon naps on the verandah, and smaller sizes for prayers and for visitors to sit on. My mother kept them in rolls, five or six rolled together according to quality, covered with a cylinder of ticking and stood end up along her dressing-room.

Although we used imported crockery for the table we could not do without Burmese pottery for other purposes. Water-pots and goblets of light pottery from Twante, near Rangoon, were necessary to keep the water cool. There must be special pots for the altar water, for washing faces, for drinking water (in which pot, however, we kept a sand filter bought from Rangoon), and goblets in all bedrooms. For baths we had big black voluminous jars from Upper Burma, of a less porous pottery with a salt glaze on it, about 30 inches high and wide-mouthed. Smaller ones like these were kept for pickling mangoes and other green fruits. In the kitchen also, the modern aluminium pots would not do for such purposes as cooking acid leaves and fish curry that had tamarind in it; an earthen pot was always used for *chimbaung*, roselle leaves. Moreover, the *salaungbon*, or cover, of an earthern pot can always be used for baking fish paste, a daily

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CHAPTER XXVII

LACQUER WARE

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FOR a long time it was assumed that Japanese and Chinese lacquered goods were simply papier-mâché. A popular fancy for the ware has brought to the knowledge of all who care for the information that it is really wood of different kinds painted over with the juice of the urushi tree. Should fashion ever inspire a similar enthusiasm for Burmese productions of the same kind, it is probable that it may be supposed that these also are composed of solid wood, and people will wonder at the extreme thinness and flexibility of the finer specimens. But it is only the coarsest ware which is thus produced. All the better boxes and cups are made of a woven basket-work of strips of bamboo; the varnish used on them is, like the Japanese lacquer, the sap obtained from the stem of a tree, and has nothing whatever to do with the insect-produced lac, such as English varnishers employ in solution with alcohol. I am no botanist enough to know whether the urushi (*Rhus vernicifera*), the Japanese tree, is identical with the Burman thi'si (*Melanorrhœa usitatissima*), or even whether it is of the same genus or order. Thi'si (literally wood-oil) is dark in colour from the moment it is gathered, whereas the urushi sap is described as being light yellow when first extracted, and only turning black after considerable exposure to the air. The urushi has been cultivated by royal order for hundreds of years in Japan; but in Burma, though the Forest Department declares the thi'si a reserved tree, there is no attempt at organised cultivation, and the thi'si-bin grows wild in the jungle. Not even near Nyaung-u, where nearly

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the white lead and thana'kha for the complexion, and a few tresses of false hair. Other articles are the pyramidal tamin-sa-ôk, used for carrying food to the monasteries and the pagodas, fashioned somewhat in the style of the sacred spires, of five or seven roofs, and of all sizes from eighteen inches to the huge things, the height of a man, which the king sent under the royal umbrellas to the Arakan pagoda in Mandalay. Byat, platters of all sizes, up to the gigantic circular tray as big as a small table, used for dishing up the family dinner, are always made of wood, like the Japan ware. The people do not think much of them, and they are therefore almost always quite plain, either black or red. There is no inferiority to the Japanese in capacity for sketching fantastic designs. The future may see great developments in this branch of the art, but at present it is practically untouched. It is unfortunate that enterprise so far has taken the form of making "peg" tumblers and cigar-cases instead of developing national forms.

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The process of manufacture is as follows: Little basket-like boxes of the required shape and size are woven of fine bamboo wicker-work, upon round chucks of wood prepared and firmly fixed for the purpose. The bamboos used, which are usually split and cleaned by the women and children, are of different kinds, that called myinwa being the most highly esteemed. Similarly, the yet, or woven basket-work, is of different degrees of excellence, the kyaungleinyet being the finest. Some of the Shans and better workmen at Nyaung-u are celebrated for the delicacy of their work. On this is then evenly applied with the hand (so that the slightest particle of sand or dirt may be at once detected) a coat of the pure wood-oil. This is then put away to dry—not in the sun, which is apt to pucker and blister it, but in a cool airy place. Some careful workmen have often an underground room prepared specially for the purpose. After three days it is quite dry and hard, and is then liberally and evenly covered over with a paste called thayo. This is made in a variety of ways, the commonest being a mixture of finely-sifted teak sawdust, thi'si, and rice-water. But instead of the sawdust, or often mixed with it, finely-ground bone-ash, or paddy-husk burnt and strained through a cloth,

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is kneaded in. In the coarse, common articles for every-day use, tempered clay and some other materials are often used; but this being thicker and less putty-like, is apt to scale and come off in flakes, especially if at all roughly used. This thayo is allowed to dry quite hard, and the box is then fastened to a rude lathe, which is turned with one hand, while the other is employed in polishing the box. This smoothing-down is effected with sifted ashes, or sometimes with a piece of silicious bamboo, which is as good as fine sand-paper. When this is done the box is ready for a fresh coat, which almost invariably consists of a mixture of finely-powdered bone-ashes and thi'si. This, after drying, is polished in the same way as before. We have now a box of a brilliant glossy black, in itself very pretty and fit for use anywhere. But this is only the end of the first stage; none but the byat and common wooden platters are left in this state.

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The ground colour of the great majority of the boxes and cups is red; but some of the black wood-oil is required to rise through it and define the pattern. This is effected in a most ingenious way. The black box is put on the lathe again and turned round, while the lines and spots, and the form of the black pattern generally, is sketched on with a sut, or split stile, charged with thi'si. The drawer has no guide but his eye. There is no preliminary mapping out, yet a practised hand will never make a mistake and spoil a box. The fresh thi'si thus put on stands up above the general level of the surface. The whole box is now covered with red paint; and when this is dry the box is put on the lathe again, and the operator turns it round and rubs it steadily with ashes. By this means the red paint is removed where the lines of thi'si rise above the general surface, and the black pattern stands out clearly on the red ground. A quaint chequer-work is also always produced, where the slightly projecting edges of the bamboo wicker-work raise the black wood-oil through the vermilion layer. Still, however, it is not finished. No box is complete without three colours; and this last shade is applied in an equally simple and effective way. The desired pattern is incised with a graving-tool called a kauk—often nothing

Scott G-5 (1870's-1909)1910 AP1 Burma
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531 more elaborate than a pin firmly tied to a piece of stick. Then the whole box is coated over with the new colour, and this is in its turn polished off on the lathe till nothing remains but the lines of the engraved pattern. If another colour is required, a similar process is gone through.

531 When the design is complete, a clear varnish of another
●235 vegetable oil, called shansi, with a dash of thi'si in it, is
322 applied all over as a last touch, unless indeed a very high polish is required. This is effected by rubbing gently with the powdered petrified wood found so useful in imparting a gloss to the alabaster images. The patterns are none of them very intricate, and are handed down as heirlooms from father to son, so that the same family will have all its ware made on a few clearly-defined models, and there is no fear of "spoiling a set." The invention does not as yet soar beyond scroll-work and line-figures of infinite variety; but should a foreign demand spring up there would be no lack of skill to meet it; just as the Rangoon tattooers have taken to copying pictures out of the *Graphic* on English sailors' breasts.

The supreme test of excellence in the manufacture is when the sides will bend in till they touch without cracking the varnish or breaking the wicker-work. Connoisseurs can discriminate between Shan, Nyaung-u, and the ware of other places, by the shadow thrown on the inside (which is varnished plain red or black), when the cup or circular box is held at an angle of forty-five. Three colours only are used besides the black groundwork; but variety is produced by graduating their intensity of shade. They are red, green, and yellow. Red is prepared from finely-ground vermilion mixed with shansi. The Nyaung-u people prefer a vermilion called hinthapadi ywè, prepared by themselves, to that procured from China and used elsewhere. The home-made stuff seems to be much brighter in tint. Myeni, red ochre, is used only with the coarsest work. For yellow, yellow orpiment is ground down and washed several times until a pure, impalpable powder remains. This is mixed with a pellucid gum, and when required for use, worked up with shansi. Green is obtained by adding finely-ground indigo to the yellow orpiment until the required tint is

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obtained. Red and yellow are, however, always the predominating colours. 531 285 322

The thi'si is turned to a variety of other uses besides the manufacture of lacquer-work; applied to wood, or to marble and clay images, it enables them readily to take on gilding. It is used as a waterproof varnish to all the umbrellas in the country, and makes them as impervious to rain as if they were made of wood, while it protects the palm-leaf against the rays of the sun, which otherwise would burn it as brittle as an egg-shell. All the racing and war-boats in Burma are painted with it, and the best caulking in the world could not make them more water-tight. Finally, boiled down thick it furnishes the material for delineating the square heavy characters of the sacred kammawa-sa, the ritual for the admission of brethren to the sacred order. 531 249

The oil is usually put in the sun for a short time before being used, and it is at first of a light brown colour, soon darkening into a brilliant black. It seems to be of a particularly mordant character, and raises huge blisters on the hands of some people, leaving marks of the ashy-white colour suggestive of leprosy. Hence strangers suspected of [753] being afflicted with the terrible malady always declare they are thi'si workers; and many people avoid these latter, in case they might find they had been holding communication with an outcast. A lotion composed of fine teak-wood saw-[757] dust, mixed with a little water, is used as a cure for blains. Many of the workmen periodically swallow small doses of the wood-oil, under the impression that it acts as a preventive. The capriciousness with which the varnish acts, leaving some men quite unharmed and punishing others severely, has given rise to a proverb in Nyaung-u:—

Thi'si is a witness
To a burgher's fitness;
If bad, he's marked an outcast;
If good, not long can doubt last.

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●[285]

mortar and measurers, market basket, condiments stored in cigarette tins and quart bottles. A discussion on these subjects is found under the chapter on Food.

Details were secured on the following household items:

SAUNG (blankets). Both THA-KA-LAT SAUNG (flannel blanket) and GUN SAUNG (Cotton blanket) are actually woolen blankets. (cost Rs. 25/-). Heavy cotton blankets are called CHI SAUNG . (cost Rs.15/-). Both are for individual use. In Pathwe U Myaing had one blanket of each kind which would last 3 or 4 years. In camp he has only the GUN SAUNG or Upper Burma blanket which he used for 2 years then brought from Pathwe . The females of the family had 6 cotton blankets between them (cost Rs. 12/ each). They brought 4 from Pathwe, two are "good ones", and two are "torn ones". The cotton blankets are supposed to last for 2 years according to Ma Aye Myaing. Intense love is indicated by the saying "we will go under one blanket", but double blankets are not known.

HMWE-YAR, (Enjoying place) mattress. It is a thin square cloth sack measuring 4 TAUNG on a side by 4 inches in thickness and stuffed with KAPOK. U Myaing had one at Pathwe which would last 7 or 8 years. It was made at home and valued at Rs. 30/-. Daw Aw Zar and the children shared a double mattress, a gift from her neice, in Pathwe but all sleep on split cane mats only in camp.

(KU DIN; raised wooden beds are rarely used in villages.)

GAUNG-ON, (head-lay) pillow. Pillows are made at home. Two may be made from 3 TAUNG (1½ yards) of cloth. They are cloth sacks filled with cotton and last 3 or 4 years - valued at Rs. 3/8 each. U Myaing had 2, and the females 8 at Pathwe. He used a wooden pillow made of small, raised board, while the females use rag bundles.

HPYAR, Sleeping mats. Two kinds are used; a split TA BAW plant mat and a more finely woven thin plant with over 2 under 2 weave mat. They measure 6 by 3½ feet . The mats lasted two years and were woven at home. 4 to 8 mats were kept on hand at Pathwe; here 4 mats are in use.

AYAR-KIN (sleeping place cover) bed sheet: The bedsheets used in Pathwe measured 6' by 3½' and were made of cotton. Three were used by U Myaing and lasted a year; they cost Rs. 7/- each. Camp: none.

CHIN TAUNG, Mosquito net: One kind was made of fine netted

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The daily work schedule of U Myaing while he was working as a fish processor (2 months in a year) was as follows:-

He rose at four or five in the morning said his prayers, drank plain tea, had boiled beans, fried fish and rice left over from the previous day's evening meal. After that he went to collect fish, bring it to the bank and start work on it. He rested from 11 o'clock to 2 o'clock. At two he resumed work till about five when he would be finished for the day. Sometimes he would sleep at the work place after returning home for his evening meal.

Work in the Refugee Camp.

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Shortly after arriving at the Camp U Myaing worked in Sulian Park near the Kokine market where a factory for spinning and weaving cloth was being set up. The contractor was Chinese, and he engaged between 30 to 35 labourers every day. These labourers were unskilled and they were employed in levelling the ground and laying the foundation of the factory. Most of the labourers were Indians - there being only two Burmans, U Myaing and Ma Aye Myaing got Rs. 2/-. The working hours stretched from eight in the morning to 12 noon, with a break of one hour at 12. At one o'clock they resumed work and continued until five in the evening. In the mornings they had to go to the factory by themselves, and this took them about a half hour walk. Sometimes they were sent home in a truck in the evenings. U Myaing had to enquire each day at various places for a chance to work. He was not always successful.

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It was not usual for Ma Aye Myaing to come along like this to work as a labourer. This was the first time she did so. Ma Aye Myaing said that in future she would accompany U Myaing whenever there are prospects of such work. They knew that women worked in this way, but had not known that such work was available.

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As a matter of fact, I met U Myaing through the mats which were made in his camp. We got dinner place mats through him. These are rectangular 1½ feet by 2 feet mats of finely-woven split cane in an over 2 - under 2 pattern. They cost Rs. 2/8 each. U Myaing arranged for the making of these mats and collected the money for them, but

285 H37 they were made by friends. Ma Aye Myaing and Daw Aw Zar appear to specialise in the larger mats such as used for sleeping. Mat making appears to be an occupation which in ordinary times is unimportant but it is relied heavily upon in bad times.

461 562 561 [277] 874 [294] The children are put to work around the house and in processing the fish at an early age. Just recently U Myaing's eldest daughter left school to learn a trade. She left one month ago from the fourth standard, to learn cheroot rolling. In another month's time she will have learnt how. She does not have to pay any fees - neither is she paid for her help. She lives with her aunt (U Myaing's sister) and has her meals there. Near their house there is also an embroidery shop which is owned by her aunt. At night U Myaing's daughter is taught embroidery and sewing by her aunt. The owner of the cheroot rolling shop is not a relative, but the women who work there are aunts and grand-aunts of the girl. When she has learnt the trade, then she will be paid between two and three rupees a day on piece work basis.

463 363 512 At present (May 1951) U Myaing is working as a sweeper in the Rangoon Municipality on a monthly wage of Rs. 80/-. There is an overseer placed over him every day. U Myaing's main job is to keep one street in town clean. He leaves his house at six and arrives at the overseer's by half past six and there a roll-call is taken of about a hundred of them. At seven he begins on his street and stops at about half-eight to go to answer the roll-call (see below for rest of schedule).. He has personal contact only with the overseer, the doctor and the WUNDAUK (official). All three of them go around the town to see if they work hard enough. The WUNDAUK also comes everyday to witness the roll-call. "If we do not do good work we shall be dismissed. Everything is in their hands. But they do so after two or three warnings. We do not possess any rights at all. Sometimes offenders are sent to other streets that require harder labour."

U Myaing's street is located in Myoni-gon, and he has to clean the street of dirt as well as clean the drains on either side.

His daily schedule at present is as follows: He rises at 4, washes his face and cleans his teeth, says his prayers and then has plain tea which Ma Aye Myaing has prepared for him. At six he leaves

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HNA-KOT-SON (Mortar): The mortar resembles an inverted truncated cone with a loop handle extending from the rim. It is made of the same red-brown glazed ware described above. A teak wood pestle (GYEGNE) is a rounded club about 15 inches long and 2 inches in diameter. Some are ornate with circular bands, but U Myaing's club is plain. It took him about an hour to make. The mortar was purchased here and cost 10 annas. Number of mortars in Pathwe: 1, Camp: 1. [531]

DAW O (aluminum cooking pot): The aluminum cooking pot is a wide cylindrical form with a flat lid. They are made locally. U Myaing's family had three in camp ranging in size from 10 inches in diameter and 4 inches high to 12 inches in diameter and 5 inches high. The vessels were used for cooking rice and curry. A pot holding 6 LON of rice costs Rs. 6/-. Pathwe number: several, camp: 3. [435]

DANYIN LON (aluminum pail): One aluminum pail, cylindrical in form with a height of 7 inches and diameter of 6 inches, and wire handle, was used in camp as a container in hauling foods from market and in their preparations. It cost Rs. 2/8 in Rangoon. Pathwe: [435]

Miscellaneous containers: Several beer bottles and circular cigarette tins were used in camp to contain oils and spices.

SAMEN JAIK (Tiffin Carrier): A rectangular lunch box, or tiffin carrier, of aluminum was bought in Rangoon for Rs.3/8, Pathwe: Rs. 12/-.

KYWAY PAG-KHYA (China Plates): A single broken china plate was used as a cover for the water jar in camp. This was one of three brought from Pathwe, where they cost Rs. 2/-. This is a special ware which was usually reserved for guests. In Pathwe, the family had enough for family use and guests on special occasions.

THAN PAG-KHYA (enamelled iron plates): Two enamelled iron plates of shallow dish and bowl form (about 12 inches in diameter) were used in camp. These cost Rs. 2/- each. Pathwe: 0.

YAUNGYA (stirring spoons): Two spatulate bladed spoons with thin handles 12 inches long were used as stirring spoons in the preparation of food. The iron one was bought in Rangoon and cost 10 annas. The wooden one was made by U Myaing in Pathwe out of teakwood. It took him 2 hours to make it with a small knife.

HOONE (eating spoons): Chinese porcelain spoons (KYWAY) and brass spoons (KYAK) were used indiscriminately to dip curry sauce over the rice. The Chinese spoons are boat shaped with high and hollow handles. The brass spoons are similar to European soup spoons. The porcelain spoons were preferred aesthetically, but because the children frequently broke them, brass spoons were most commonly used. Cost and frequency: In Pathwe, 60. Camp: 8.
Food is commonly eaten with the fingers in all levels of Burmese society.

DAH (knife): The big knife used in camp for cutting fire-wood and other chopping jobs was about 1½ ft t long including an 8 inch wooden handle bound in iron. The steel blade is curved slightly upward, has a square end and is used as a chopper frequently with two hands on the handle. The one in camp was bought "long ago" and cost Rs. 4/-. A small knife with a pointed steel blade was used for whittling and cutting in the preparation of food. Pathwe: 10, most for work in IN. Camp 2. [412] [435]

KYWE (mat rest): A hollow disc woven of soft reeds with a diameter of 6 to 8 inches is used to rest pots on - so that the carbon on their bases will not blacken the surface on which they rest. These are readily made by the women of the family. [285]

PYI DAING (Measurers): There are two of these containers, used for measuring rice in camp. The iron one had a hole in it, but was retained as a general container. It had been replaced by the wicker

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basket PYIDAUNG. Both cost a rupee. One does not seem to be preferred to the other except as getting them allows a bargain to be made. The form is that of a pear shaped body with a square base, measuring about 6 by 8 inches. The basket is constructed in the wicker technique with small, whole reeds. Pathwe: 2. Camp: 1.

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CHIN DAUNG (storage basket): The form of this basket is a larger version of the measurers. It has, however, an open weave giving a checkered effect to the sides and bottom. It is used to store objects including food. At Pathwe this basket was used in working the INS. The fish were scooped up, and later washed in them. The two used in camp were brought from Pathwe where they cost Rs. 1/4- Camp: 1, Pathwe: 15 for washing fish.

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Winnowing trays: Shallow baskets about 2½ feet in diameter and 2 inches high were used as shifting and storage trays. The SAGAW has a rounded base; whole the SAGAR has a flat base with fiber walls. Both are made of flat, wide-meshed reeds. The trays used in camp came from Pathwe where they cost Rs. 1/4 each. Pathwe: 1.

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THE CHIN (Marketing basket): This basket is in the general shape of a cylinder, ½ feet wide and 8 inches high, with open, flat reed sides and a semi-circular handle across the top. It is used to carry objects from market and to store them in the house. Pathwe: 2, Camp: 1.

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U Myaing expresses the contrast between the camp equipment and that of Pathwe: "These objects in camp are barely sufficient. We have to live as we are. In our own district we had sufficient to pail in boxes. The extra ones were nailed in boxes and only enough were taken out for the seven people who eat. When visiters come, good ones are brought out. Plates for curry, plates for eating rice. There were various kinds."

Food Items

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Ma Aye Myaing gave as complete a set of data on the food consumption of her family as she could. The following data is inclusive for the family of seven, both in Pantanaw and the refugee camp. Ma Aye Myaing decides what dishes to cook for each meal of the day, and she does this without any consultation with U Myaing. She does not ask him what he would like for each meal, although sometimes when he expresses a desire for a certain dish she sees to it that it is prepared. She has a free hand in deciding what to cook for each meal in the day. Definitions of the weights and measures used follow in a glossary. The data is organized under the headings of (1) Main dishes and raw foods, (2) supplementary dishes and TO-ZAIK (vegetables eaten with RICE), and (3) trifles.

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124. LASHING THE ROOF-POLES.

these (No. 16). Frequently the water-stand is a separate erection, opening into one of the lower bays. There are several kinds of roof-thatch, of which the commonest is *thekkè*, a broad-leaved grass, bound on sticks of split bamboo. The leaf of the *dani* palm makes the best thatch. The large leathery leaf of the *in* tree is also used. A roofing material called *wagàt* is made of bamboo shingles, of which strips are held together by three or four wattles, handy for tying to the rafters. This material is less inflammable than *thekkè*. Tiles and modern wooden shingles can only be used on strong roof-frames. Floor-mats of the stoutest kind are plaited of the outer silicious rind of the bamboo (*hnì-dyaw*). Common mats are plaited of the inner fibre split into withes, one half to three-quarters of an inch broad, and about one-twentieth in thickness. Finer and more pliable mats are made of the reed *thabàw*. The finest of all are made of the outer skin of the *thin* plant. *Thimbyu* is the universal sleeping-mat.

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The cloth used in Burma is now, for the most part, imported, as are also the cotton yarns, both plain and coloured. Nevertheless, the domestic cloth industry continues to flourish in the villages. Native textile cotton (*wā*) is of two varieties, one white, the other dun. The cotton, after being culled from the plants, is seeded between wooden rollers. The fibre, caked together by the rollers, is scutched by flicking it off the string of a bow into a basket, where the fibres disperse again. It is then worked between the palms into flakes convenient for the spinner (*baing-hngin*). The plain spindle, common everywhere in India, is obsolete in Burma where even the hill-people use the wheel (*yit*). With the exception of the stuff for the

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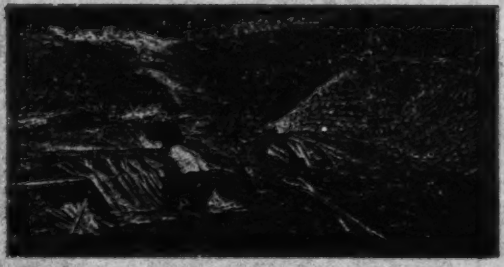

125. PLAITING WALL-MATS.

25: Ferrars E-5 (ca. 1890) 1901 AP1 Burma
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218. ROPE-WALK.

inner side is brightly decorated with floss silks. Gilt umbrellas (*zkwe-dî*) are dedicated in the *kyaung*, but are not actually used. The white umbrella (*thbyu*) is the emblem of sovereignty. The *thbyu* is set above the images of the Buddha and above the remains of the *yahán*, who are assumed at their death to enter upon a higher spiritual stage. The metal canopy surmounting the *zedi* is a conventionalised *tî* (No. 232). Of late, European umbrellas have become a staple import of Burma.

Lacquer-ware vessels and utensils—light, durable, and watertight—are made with the help of *thitsi*, the exudation of the bark of *Melanorrhœa usitatissima*, a common tree of the *in* forest. The gum blackens to jet on exposure to the air. It dries slower than the "Japan black" of commerce, but is much tougher; it sells for two to three rupees a viss. *Thitsi* is applied to wood turnery and bamboo wickerwork, either plain or with pigments, generally with vermilion. The commonest lacquer goods are platters (*byat* and *daunglan*), which are turned of teak or *yamané* wood and given two or three coats of *thitsi*. After the platters, the principal article of lacquer-ware is the betel-box (*kun-it*). Coarse lacquering is done everywhere in the dry region, but the betel-box industry is peculiar to Pagán. The advantage of lacquer-ware and of a deep cover for the betel-box, is to keep the green leaf fresh At first sight it appears incredible that these exact cylindrical boxes with their trays and covers, fitting as if each piece had been turned out of the block, should start from a wicker-work frame. Yet so it is; the models are plaited so true that the rest

219. HILL-PEOPLE TWISTING ROPE.

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221. UMBRELLA MAKERS.

of the work can be done on a lathe. To prepare the wicker for lacquering, it is first given a "rough-stuffing" of fine clay to fill the interstices. The work is then painted with *thissi*, which penetrates and toughens the clay and binds the fibres of the wicker. When the *thissi* has set, which takes several days, the work is put on the chuck of a bow-lathe and ground smooth with a fibrous stone—a petrifaction-product. Varnishing and grinding are repeated till the surface is smooth, colour being added to the later coats. Then a coat of contrasted colour is given, and when the varnish is about half set, the pattern is chipped with a metal style through the fresh layer to the hard lacquer beneath. After the work has hardened, the patterns are embellished by scoring rings through the layers, with a tool like a carpenter's gouge, so as to bring out the underlying contrasts. The patterns are arabesques and conventionalized figures.* Subject designs are also executed (No. 224). Finally the lacquer is polished with buffs of graduated fineness. A peculiarity of *thissi* is that it sets hardest in a moist atmosphere. Every manufacturer has an underground cellar—a thing almost unknown in Burma—for the wares to harden in. Pagán, the centre of the industry, is at the same time the driest locality of the dry zone. The finest lacquer, which is only made by a few highly-skilled workmen, is so elastic that the lips of a cup may be brought to meet without the ware cracking. As much as twenty-five rupees is paid for a cup of such quality. The ordinary ware has not the tenth part of this elasticity, and sells for one to ten rupees a box. The deep cover of the betel-box is the traveller's ordinary drinking-cup.

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222. LACQUER-WARE MANUFACTURE.

* See the end-papers of the binding of this volume.